

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-10 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-14

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 NRC-07 OES-07 DODE-00

SS-15 SP-02 FEA-01 AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 EPG-02

FPC-01 H-02 INT-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-15 STR-04

TRSE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 /143 W

-----064869 151010Z /23

R 150642Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 898

INFO AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

ERDA HQ GERMANTOWN

DRDA HQ WASHDC

UNCLAS CANBERRA 4974

USOECD

USIAEC

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: EMIN, ENRG, AS

SUBJ: DEVELOPMENTS ON AUSTRALIAN URANIUM SCENE

REF: CANBERRA 04791

I. CABINET TALKS ON URANIUM BEGIN.

1. THIS WEEK THE FEDERAL CABINET BEGAN ITS DISCUSSION OF
GOA URANIUM POLICY. IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT THE DELIBER-
ATIONS ARE COVERING THESE GENERAL POLICY AREAS: (1) ENVIR-
ONMENTAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE MINING, MILLING AND EXPORT-
ING OF URANIUM; (2) EXPORT OF URANIUM; (3) NUCLEAR SAFE-
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GUARDS; (4) ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS; AND (5) ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE PROPOSED KAKADU NATIONAL PARK IN THE URANIUM AREA
OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

2. THE QUESTION OF SEQUENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF URANIUM
RESOURCES IS NOT SCHEDULED FOR DISCUSSION AT THIS TIME.
CABINET IS AWAITING THE REPORT OF GOA MARKETING GROUP

WHICH IS ASSESSING FOREIGN DEMAND FOR AUSTRALIAN URANIUM.

3. THERE HAS BEEN UNCONFIRMED PRESS SPECULATION THAT CABINET IS DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT AUSTRALIA SHOULD TRY TO ESTABLISH DOMESTIC URANIUM ENRICHMENT CAPABILITY.

4. THERE IS NO INDICATION WHEN CABINET DECISION ON URANIUM WILL BE ANNOUNCED, BUT IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT THE DECISION WILL BE POSTPONED UNTIL JUSTICE FOX SUBMITS AN ADDITIONAL REPORT ON URANIUM. FOX IS HALF WAY THROUGH FOUR MONTH TOUR TO STUDY FOREIGN REQUIREMENTS AND SAFEGUARDS FOR URANIUM. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED IN PRESS THAT FOX HAS STRENGTHENED HIS SUPPORT FOR MINING AND EXPORT OF URANIUM.

II. PRIME MINISTER ADDRESSES NATIONAL PRESS CLUB.

5. IN JULY 13 ADDRESS TO NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, PRIME MINISTER FRASER BERATED AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY (ALP) FOR ITS POLICY DECISION ON URANIUM. PRIME MINISTER CITED NUMEROUS INSTANCES WHERE ALP, WHILE GOVERNMENT, STATED THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD BE RELIABLE SUPPLIER OF URANIUM TO WORLD. PRIME MINISTER THEN RAISED QUESTION, WHY RECENT SWITCH IN ALP POLICY?

6. PRIME MINISTER MADE NO STATEMENTS ABOUT IMPENDING GOA URANIUM POLICY DECISIONS. HE ONLY REFERRED TO FACT THAT FEDERAL CABINET HAD BEGUN ITS CONSIDERATION OF URANIUM

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ISSUE. HE AGAIN REITERATED "THAT IF URANIUM IS PERMITTED TO BE EXPORTED, MOST STRINGENT SET OF SAFEGUARDS WILL BE APPLIED, BOTH THROUGH COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS OF IAEA AND THROUGH BILATERAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND EACH USER-COUNTRY."

III. BRISBANE WATERSIDE BRANCH BANS HANDLING OF URANIUM.

7. IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT BRISBANE BRANCH OF WATERSIDE WORKERS FEDERATION (WWF) HAS IMPOSED BAN ON HANDLING OF URANIUM AT PORT OF BRISBANE. BRISBANE LOCAL BRANCH NOW JOINS THE MELBOURNE BRANCH IN DEFIANCE OF AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS (ACTU) POLICY WHICH IS TO HONOR EXISTING URANIUM CONTRACTS BY NOT IMPEDING THE MOVEMENT OF YELLOW-CAKE THROUGH PORTS. AT THIS TIME, SYDNEY BRANCH OF WWF HAS NOT REFUSED TO HANDLE URANIUM.

IV. BOB HAWKE COMMENTS ON ALP URANIUM POLICY

8. BOB HAWKE, PRESIDENT OF BOTH AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS (ACTU) AND FEDERAL AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY (ALP) HAS STATED THAT HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND LOGIC OF KEEPING

AUSTRALIAN URANIUM IN GROUND UNLESS BY DOING THIS KNOWN DANGERS OF URANIUM USE COULD BE REDUCED. IF AUSTRALIA REFUSES TO SUPPLY URANIUM HAWKE STATED THAT IT HAS BEEN SHOWN THAT URANIUM USERS WOULD GET THEIR SUPPLIES ELSEWHERE AND THE AUSTRALIAN REFUSAL WOULD HAVE EFFECT OF INCREASING PRICE OF URANIUM.

9. HAWKE'S COMMENTS FOLLOW CLOSELY ALP DECISION TO PLACE INDEFINITE MORATORIUM ON MINING, MILLING AND EXPORT OF URANIUM UNTL SUCH TIME THA ADEQUATE NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS HAVE DEVELOPED AND PUBLIC DEBATE HAS TAKEN PLACE. AFTER MAKING ABOVE COMMENTS, HAWKE SAID HE STILL SUPPORTED ALP URANIUM POLICY, BUT HE BELIEVED AUSTRALIA EVENTUALLY SHOULD MINE AND EXPORT URANIUM.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition History: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
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TAGS: EMIN, ENRG, AS, ALP
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